

10/606,203 filed 06/25/2003

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Reply to Office Action of 06/26/2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A method of reducing evaporation from one or more wells of ~~at least a first multiwell plate which that~~ is configured to be placed into a stacked configuration with ~~at least one a second multiwell plate having the same general configuration as the first multiwell plate,~~ the method comprising:

providing ~~at least~~ each of the first and the second multiwell plates with a plurality of blind wells and opposing side walls ~~which that~~ extend around the plate and ~~which that~~ define a ridge spaced inwardly of the side walls and extending around the plate between the side walls ~~and the plurality of wells;~~

providing ~~at least~~ each of the first and the second multiwell plates with a downwardly extending flange ~~which that~~ extends around a lower surface of the plate ~~and which is configured to be removably received by the ridge of the at least first multiwell plate;~~

at least partially filling the ridge of the first multiwell plate with a liquid; and removably positioning ~~said at least the~~ the second multiwell plate on ~~said at least the~~ the first multiwell plate such that the flange of the second multiwell plate extends at least partially into ~~said the~~ the ridge of the first multiwell plate and contacts ~~said the~~ the liquid to thereby create a substantial evaporation barrier to prevent air entrance to the wells of the first multiwell plate to minimize evaporation of sample liquids in the wells when ~~said at least the~~ the second multiwell plate is positioned on the ~~at least first multiwell plate.~~

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid comprises at least partially filling the ridge with water.

13. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid comprises at least partially filling the ridge with a buffer solution.

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14. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid is performed before said at least second multiwell plate is removably positioned on said at least first multiwell plate.

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 11 further including providing a lower surface of said ridge of said ~~at least~~ first multiwell plate with a plurality of spaced-apart ribs ~~which that~~ extend upwardly from the ridge.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said upwardly extending ribs have a height which is less than a height of said opposing side walls of said at least first multiwell plate.

18. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said ridge includes a layer of at least one wicking material covering at least a portion of said ridge.

19. (original) The method of claim 18 wherein said at least one wicking material comprises a felt material.

20. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said ridge comprises a layer of absorbent material covering at least a portion of the ridge.

21-26 (canceled)

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27. (currently amended) A first multiwell plate which is configured to be placed in a stacked configuration with ~~at least one~~ a second multiwell plate having the same general configuration as the first multiwell plate, the first multiwell plate comprising:

a plurality of blind wells for receiving sample material therein;

opposing side walls which extend around the plate and which define a ridge spaced inwardly of the side walls and extending around the plate between the side walls ~~and the plurality of wells~~; and

a downwardly extending flange which extends around a lower surface of the plate and which is configured to be removably received by a corresponding ridge of the second multiwell plate when said first multiwell plate is removably positioned on said at least second multiwell plate in a stacked configuration.